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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: HOST NATION SENSITIVITY TO USAFE MANPOWER
REDUCTIONS

REF: EUCOM MSG DTD 121654Z FEB 07

Classified By: DCM Hugo Llorens for reason 1.4(a).

¶1. (S/NF) Reftel is EUCOM request for Embassy Madrid's assessment of host nation sensitivity to USAFE's planned manpower reductions at the Spanish air base at Moron. We are responding in these channels to underscore that the country team has an interest in trends regarding US military presence in Spain, an important element of our overall bilateral relationship with Spain. USAFE plans to eliminate 30 positions at Moron, including seven during 2007 and the remainder by the end of FY2009 due to the disestablishment of the 38th Combat Support Wing (38 CSW). We do not anticipate significant negative media attention (national, regional or local) focused on these reductions but note the need to plan carefully and coordinate in advance with the Spanish government to avoid surprises.

¶2. (S/NF) The Spanish Ministry of Defense (MOD) has to date reacted reasonably to previous DOD manpower reductions related to the relocation and decommissioning of units formerly based at NAVSTA Rota (global transformation and realignment related to the GWOT). The Foreign Ministry, however, wrote a letter to the Embassy's Charge d'Affaires in January 2005 expressing concern about potential job losses and asking the USG to do what it could to soften the impact on the Spanish workforce. In 2006, 57 local national positions were eliminated at Rota. Through careful management that reassigned certain employees and eliminated unfilled positions, no actual employees lost their jobs. Coordination with the MOD and local officials ensured that local reaction was muted.

¶3. (S/NF) No local Spanish nationals employed at Moron air base are affected by this realignment. The disestablishment of the 38 CSW at Kapaun, Germany results in the deactivation of the 712 ABG at Moron, Spain. The initial reduction of seven (7) 712 ABG active duty military positions in July 2007 will be followed by 23 more through FY2009 to meet PBD720 mandated reductions. That is, the planned 712 ABG reductions will result in the elimination of 30 of 144 (21%) assigned manpower positions, plus dependents. Given these small numbers, the disestablishment of 38 CSW's 712 ABG at Moron will have minor economic impact among on and off-base service industries.

¶4. (S/NF) The news of the disestablishment of even a small command such as 38 CSW could be perceived in the local and regional media as a threat to the health of the local job market, particularly in the context of the recently announced layoff of some 1600 employees from a US-owned Delphi car parts factory less than one hour from Moron, which has

generated protests of up to 50,000 people. Such negative local media attention would likely be disproportionate to the actual impact of 38 CSW's disestablishment. It would be important to coordinate carefully with local and Ministry officials, and to prepare a press strategy. In addition, it would be important to avoid any action before May 27, when Spain holds local and regional elections. Any action before that date has the potential to become an unpleasant election issue.

¶5. (S/NF) While this small reduction in the force size is unlikely to generate problems in and of itself, the Spanish government and local press will be attentive to any perception that the US is progressively reducing its commitment to Moron. Military commanders have a responsibility to make rational staffing and basing decisions. At the same time, the USG has a significant national security interest in maintaining a sustainable presence at Moron. In addition to the obvious benefit to the US of blanket flight clearance and unrestricted air movements in a geo-strategically important location, Moron is a US outpost on the edge of Africa and the Arab world and an important component of the bilateral relationship. It is also worth noting that the base creates good will towards the US in a part of Spain where people would otherwise have little contact with Americans. The result is that the communities near the base who have known US military over the decades have a positive view of the United States and its people. This reservoir of goodwill should not be minimized at a time of rising anti-Americanism across Europe. Finally, were the US to significantly downsize or eliminate its presence at Moron, thus allowing Spanish activities (especially its growing Eurofighter presence at the base) to naturally expand to fill the space at hand, it might prove hard to reestablish ourselves again.

¶6. (U) POC is Col. David Mayer, Air Force Attache, Tel: 34-91-587-2275, unclas email: mayerdb(at)state.gov, Siprnet: dimaydb(at)dia.smil.mil.
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